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WAR WITH GERMANY

SPEECH

OF

HON. HENRY CABOT LODGE

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 4, 1917



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WAR WITH GERMANY.

The Senate, as in Committee of the Whole, had under consideration the joint resolution (S. J. Res. 1) declaring that a state of war exists between the Imperial German Government and the Government and the people of the United States and making provision to prosecute the same.

Mr. LODGE. Mr. President, no one is more conscious than I that this is a moment for action and not for debate. But, as a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations and having taken part in framing this resolution, I wish briefly to state why I support it with the greatest earnestness of which I am capable.

The most momentous power entrusted to Congress by the Constitution is the authority to declare war, and never has Congress been called to a more solemn exercise of this great function than at this moment. We have submitted to wrongs and outrages from the central powers of Europe—wrongs which involve not only injury to property but the destruction of American lives—with a long patience. We have borne and foreborne to the very limit of endurance. Now the inevitable end is here and we are about to declare war against Germany.

Speaking for myself and, I hope, for my associates generally on this side of the Chamber, I desire to say that in this crisis, and when the country is at war, party lines will disappear, and this disappearance of the party line will, I am confident, not be confined to the minority. Both Democrats and Republicans must forget party in the presence of the common danger. This is not, and can not be, a party war. It is a war in which all Americans must be united, and no one must ask a loyal citizen, high or low, who seeks to serve his country in the field or in civil life to what party he belongs, any more than it would be possible to ask his religion or his race. As Americans we shall all, I am sure, be prepared to give to the Executive money,

men, and all the necessary powers for waging war with energy and driving it forward to a successful conclusion. The President has made recommendations as to the action which he hopes Congress will take, with which I for one am in most thorough accord.

We have only a very small Army and we must proceed at once as rapidly as possible to build up a large one fit to defend the country in any emergency. We must provide for the future and for the supply of men for the Army by a system of universal military training. I agree with the President that this new Army should be chosen upon the "principle of universal liability to service." Our Navy is strong in certain branches and very weak in others. It must be our business to supply the deficiencies as rapidly as possible. Fortunately those deficiencies are of the kind which can be most quickly supplied. It is our duty to see to it that all the money and all the legislation necessary for both the Army and Navy are given at once.

The President has said that war "will involve the utmost practicable cooperation in counsel and action with the Governments now at war with Germany and, as incident to that, the extension to those Governments of the most liberal financial credits, in order that our resources may so far as possible be added to theirs." I am not only in full agreement with this policy advised by the President, but it seems to me that nothing is more important than to follow it out. I am as thorough a believer as ever in the general policy laid down by Washington when he advised the people of the United States not to enter into permanent alliances; but the man who won the American Revolution through the alliance with France would have been the last to lay down a hard and fast rule that under no circumstances and for no purposes were we ever to ally ourselves with other nations. He covers this point completely in the Farewell Address, where he says:

✓ Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Farseeing and wise, he knew very well that dangers might come which would make a temporary alliance or agreement with

foreign nations imperative. That time has arrived. It would be madness for us to attempt to make war alone upon Germany, and find ourselves, perhaps, at the end left isolated, at war with that power, when all the other nations had made peace, because we had not associated ourselves with them. The allies of the entente, as they are called, are fighting a common foe, and their foe is now ours. We can not send a great army across the ocean, for we have no army to send. Yet I should be glad for one if we could send now 10,000 men of our Regular troops, so that the flag of the United States might at least be unfurled in the fields of France. I believe that the mere sight of that flag in that region made so desolate by war would stimulate the courage and help the success of those who have the same aim which we have and who seek the same victory. We can also help the allies, as the President recommends, with large credits and with those supplies which we can furnish and which they lack. We can not do more in any direction to bring this war to a speedy end than to give those credits and furnish those supplies.

The President has told us that German spies "were here even before the war began, and it is, unhappily, not a matter of conjecture, but a fact proved in our courts of justice, that the intrigues which have more than once come perilously near to disturbing the peace and dislocating the industries of the country have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal direction of official agents of the Imperial Government accredited to the Government of the United States." I believe myself that the overwhelming mass of our citizens of German descent are just as loyal to the United States as any citizens could possibly be. But there is this class of agents of the Imperial German Government who are ready to engage in plots and crimes to the injury of the people of this country. "Disloyalty," if I may again borrow the words of the President, "must be put down with a firm hand."

The purpose of the German submarine campaign is the destruction of the world's mercantile tonnage. In the old days, in previous wars, the ships of warring nations were captured,

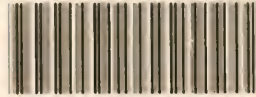
frequently in large numbers, as was the case when our privateers ranged the English Channel in the War of 1812. But it must not be forgotten that, with few exceptions, these merchant vessels, when captured, were sent into port, condemned as prizes, and again put afloat. The total tonnage of the world was not materially reduced. But the German submarine war, ruthlessly carried on, is directed toward the destruction of the tonnage of the whole world. Forced into war, as we now are, our first action should be to repair in some measure this loss to our own tonnage and to that of the world by seizing the ships of Germany now in our ports and putting that additional tonnage into the world's service.

Mr. President, we have never been a military Nation; we are not prepared for war in the modern sense; but we have vast resources and unbounded energies, and the day when war is declared we should devote ourselves to calling out those resources and organizing those energies so that they can be used with the utmost effect in hastening the complete victory. The worst of all wars is a feeble war. War is too awful to be entered upon half-heartedly. If we fight at all, we must fight for all we are worth. It must be no weak, hesitating war. The most merciful war is that which is most vigorously waged and which comes most quickly to an end.

Mr. President, no one feels the horrors of war more than I. It is with no light heart, but with profound sadness, although with hope and courage, that I see my country compelled to enter the great field of conflict. But there are, in my opinion, some things worse for a nation than war. National degeneracy is worse; national cowardice is worse. The division of our people into race groups, striving to direct the course of the United States in the interest of some other country when we should have but one allegiance, one hope, and one tradition is far worse. All these dangers have been gathering about us and darkening the horizon during the last three years. Whatever suffering and misery war may bring it will at least sweep these foul things away. Instead of division into race groups, it will unify us into one Nation, and national degeneracy and national cowardice will

slink back into the darkness from which they should never have emerged.

I also believe that on our entrance into this war, under the conditions which it has assumed, our future peace, our independence as a proud and high-spirited Nation, our very security are at stake. There is no other way, as I see it, except by war to save these things without which national existence is a mockery and a sham. But there is a still higher purpose here as I look upon it. The President has said with great justice that Germany is making war on all nations. We do not enter upon this war to secure victory for one nation as against another. We enter this war to unite with those who are fighting the common foe in order to preserve human freedom, democracy, and modern civilization. They are all in grievous peril; they are all threatened. This war is a war, as I see it, against barbarism, not the anarchical barbarism of what are known as the Dark Ages, but organized barbarism panoplied in all the devices for the destruction of human life which science, beneficent science, can bring forth. We are resisting an effort to thrust mankind back to forms of government, to political creeds and methods of conquest which we had hoped had disappeared forever from the world. We are fighting against a nation which, in the fashion of centuries ago, drags the inhabitants of conquered lands into slavery; which carries off women and girls for even worse purposes; which in its mad desire to conquer mankind and trample them under foot has stopped at no wrong, has regarded no treaty. The work which we are called upon to do when we enter this war is to preserve the principles of human liberty, the principles of democracy, and the light of modern civilization; all that we most love, all that we hold dearer than life itself. In such a battle we can not fail to win. I am glad that my country is to share in this preservation of human freedom. I wish to see my country gathered with the other nations who are fighting for the same end when the time for peace comes. We seek no conquests, we desire no territory and no new dominions. We wish simply to preserve our own peace and our own security, to uphold the great doctrine which



guards the American hemisphere, and to see the disappearance of all wars or rumors of wars from the East, if any dangers there exist. What we want most of all by this victory which we shall help to win is to secure the world's peace, broad-based on freedom and democracy, a world not controlled by a Prussian military autocracy, by Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, but by the will of the free people of the earth. We shall achieve this result, and when we achieve it we shall be able to say that we have helped to confer great blessings upon mankind, and that we have not fought in vain.

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